Smart Lipo™ Laser Assisted Liposuction

It is rare that a technology comes along that has the ability (in the right hands) to revolutionize an industry. American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) statistics indicate that procedures involving the removal of fat totaled $59 billion last year while facial aesthetics number about a third of that.

It is clear that the public is very interested in tuning themselves up, contouring their bodies and becoming more aware of their outward appearance.

Liposuction was first performed in France by an obstetrician on prostitutes wanting to improve their figures. Without a clean, sterile environment many of these prostitutes died of infection.

Liposuction underwent an evolution in the past 100 years. Sterile techniques and the use of lidocaine (numbing medicine) and epinephrine (adrenaline) to decrease bleeding has made this procedure much safer – giving rise to the term “tumescent technique”.

Now that liposuction had been made safer a drawback to standard liposuction has been the skin that is left behind. We ask a lot of this skin! After removing the bulk of the fat from beneath, we expect that skin to shrink and contract, giving us that contoured look.

The addition of a laser under the skin has thus revolutionized the industry by providing heat to the undersurface of the skin enabling immediate contraction. The same contraction is seen when frying chicken with the skin on - the skin responds to heat by - you guessed it - contraction!

The Smart Lipo system was invented by Cynosure and is the first FDA approved laser that can provide a solution to the sagging skin component of any liposuction area. The laser is meant to be used on any part of the body, but it works better in small to medium areas especially under the chin, jaw line, neck, arms, abdomen, flanks, bra lines, and thighs.

It is a terrific tool when both standard Power Assisted Lipo (Lipo with a moving cannula) is performed along with Smart Lipo. This is powerful as it removes a lot of the fat underneath of the skin, i.e. the “bulk” of fat combined with the melting and shrinking effects of the laser.

Smart Lipo may be performed by itself in about a third of the cases (people with small areas especially around the outer thighs and to remove cellulite near the lower end of the buttocks) and under the chin and jowls. The body then absorbs the melted fat without any problems.

Smart Lipo has a clear advantage over other types of Lipoin that it can be done while the patient is awake with only oral sedatives. All of the patients I have performed on in the office have been done under local anesthesia, able to return to work the next day with only minimal to no bruising and swelling.

The patients are brought in the day of surgery by our transportation (included as necessary). They have been given oral medication hours before surgery is planned to relax them. The areas are then marked and a local anesthetic is placed under the skin. The Smart Lipo 1mm cannula is then applied under the skin causing the fat to melt and the skin to rapidly shrink. After the procedure is performed, the patient is wrapped in a garment (two weeks non-stop) and the patient is driven home.

The patients are then instructed to take an antibiotic for a few days as well as a mild pain reliever. I had the procedure performed on myself and was out to dinner that night as well as back at work operating the next day!

Typical results will be seen in 13 weeks but can take as long as one year depending on your age, skin, and a multitude of other factors. Be patient! The results are worth the wait!

I am often asked if fat “grows back” or “grows elsewhere.” Once the fat is removed it does not grow back. The fat cells that were not destroyed, however can themselves get larger. So maintaining a healthy lifestyle commitment is key to your happiness!

When choosing your surgeon for this remember the following: There is no substitute for a Board Certified Plastic Surgeon.

The people who may be providing your service may not even be surgeons! Ask to see his or her credentials (Board Certification by the American Board of Plastic Surgery) before signing or better yet, he or she should post residency graduation documents on the wall. Having a Board Certified plastic surgeon ensures that you are receiving care form someone who has undergone rigorous testing and peer review. For more information you may go to the board’s website www.abps.org or The American Society of Plastic Surgery’s website www.plasticsurgery.org.

Thomas T. Jeneby, M.D., Board Certified Plastic Surgeon since 2003. Member American Society of Plastic Surgeons. Dr Jeneby is a Consumer’s Guide Top Doctor 2007 and a S.A. Top Doctor 2007. He was the first to perform Smart Lipo in San Antonio and the second Plastic Surgeon in Texas to own and operate one. His practice has the distinction of being a National Smart Lipo training facility and has been asked to speak nationally and internationally about the procedure. Visit www.drjenebyplasticsurgery.com or call 210 270 8595 for information.